

60 years ago, our nation's transportation systems looked nothing like the vast freeway, rail, and airline systems we have today. It took the leadership of President Dwight D. Eisenhower to build the Interstate Highway System that the majority of us use on a daily basis. These highways connected our nation like never before, reshaping American commerce and the way we travel along the way.

However, our transportation systems have become strained as we move further into the 21st century. Decades of underinvestment have taken their toll. Today, almost 61,000 miles on the National Highway System are in poor or fair condition; one in every four bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; and more than 32,500 public transit buses and vans have exceeded their useful life.

The deteriorating state of our nation's transportation infrastructure is a direct threat to our economy and quality of life. Poor roads and air routes mean farmers cannot truck their goods to market and parts of our state and nation are cut off from economic opportunities. Because transportation is so critical to the future of our Valley, I have made this issue one of my top priorities.

### Local Investments

Through my support, the Recovery Act has delivered millions of federal dollars to improve transportation and create jobs in our Valley. Examples include:

- \$15.2 million to replace the Chester Avenue Bridge in Bakersfield
- \$2.2 million for pavement reconstruction of Friant Ave from Shepherd to SR-41
- \$1.4 million to the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency to add new public buses and equipment
- \$8.1 million to the Golden Empire Transit District to implement improvements and maintenance to Bakersfield's transportation system

### High-Speed Rail

Just as Eisenhower's highway system transformed American travel, I believe high-speed rail will shape the way Americans travel medium distances of 100 to 500 miles for work or pleasure. A California high-speed rail system would open up the Valley to new economic opportunities while creating jobs in the process. Construction of the rail system would generate almost 300,000 jobs and provide our state with 450,000 permanent jobs once the project is completed.

Simply put, high speed rail would be an economic game changer for our Valley and connect us to other parts of the state. For these reasons, I have led the charge to bring a high speed train to California. My actions have included authoring the high-speed rail bond that Californians approved in 2008. The bond measure allocated \$9.95 billion towards the state's high-speed rail project. Recovery Act funds, coupled with the \$715 million in federal funding I helped secure for the Valley segment of the project, will allow our region to break ground on our nation's first high-speed rail system in 2012. I continue to advocate on behalf of high-speed rail for our Valley as a co-chair of the California High-Speed Rail Caucus. This is a long-term project, but one that is critical to the economic future of our region.

### SAFETEA-LU

A key to strengthening our transportation system is for Congress to pass a reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU – our nation's surface transportation law. This legislation would be the best possible stimulus for the Valley, creating jobs and making key transportation investments that would pay dividends for generations to come. It's estimated that the investments found in the SAFETEA-LU legislation would create or sustain 6 million family-wage jobs. For a list of the Valley projects I have requested to be funded through SAFETEA-LU, click [here](#) .

